



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council Committee of the Whole

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Mayor Heather Bond Somers, Councilors Dean G. Antipas, Bruce S. Flax, Bill Johnson, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Deborah L. Peruzzotti, Rita M. Schmidt, James L. Streeter, and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, June 5, 2012

6:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

SPECIAL MEETING - REVISED

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Somers called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Somers, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Johnson, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Streeter and Councilor Watson
Members Absent: Councilor Flax and Councilor Schmidt

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger and Executive Assistant Nicki Bresnayan.

3. NEW BUSINESS

2012-0148

Tax Abatement/Deferral/Exemption Programs - Update

Discussed

Sal Pandolfo, Director of Finance, stated he was using this opportunity to update the Council on certain tax abatement, deferral and exemption programs available to Groton taxpayers. Flyers were provided for each of the programs along with a matrix showing how many people are enrolled in each program, the exemption, and the total taxes abated. There is no reimbursement from the state on the blind or totally disabled program. There are candidates for the poor and unable to pay tax abatement, but they are not willing to apply since they have to appear publicly in front of the Council. Their petition before the Council would not meet the criteria for an executive session. The meeting must be a public meeting, but it does not have to be televised. Mayor Somers asked if the Council would be willing to not televise that portion of a meeting. Councilor Johnson asked if the information could be reviewed by staff and forwarded to the Council for review. The Town Manager noted that this item was looked at in some detail a number of years ago. There may be a way to provide staff findings and recommendations to the Council, but the final judgment must still be made by the Council. Staff will research a different procedure for the next Committee of the Whole meeting.

2012-0147

FYE 2012 Suspense List

Discussed

Sal Pandolfo, Director of Finance, explained that the suspense list represents certain taxes that have been determined to be uncollectable. Although the taxes are still legally collectable, the Town does not spend money trying to collect them. Motor vehicle accounts are still provided to DMV for registration denial. Cindy Small, Tax Collector, explained that the Town attempts to mail a bill three times. Staff also reviews the next grand list to see if someone has moved. She noted that delinquent personal property accounts are especially hard to collect.

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Antipas, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

2012-0149

Establishment of Tax Rate for General Fund (FYE 13)

Discussed

Sal Pandolfo, Director of Finance, review the progression of the FYE 2013 budgets and mill rates

from FYE 2012 Adjusted, to FYE 2013 Town Manager Proposed, Town Council (reductions) and RTM (reductions). Ultimately there is a 2% increase in the budget and a 7% increase in the mill rate. The increase from the tentative mill rate set in April is primarily due to Board of Tax Review reductions and a change in revenues associated with student impact aid. Mr. Pandolfo noted the changes made to various General Fund and CIP accounts by the Town Council and RTM. The impact of the revaluation is a redistribution of the property tax burden based on new assessments. If an assessment was reduced by 7% or greater, there will be no change or a reduction in the tax bill.

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

Town Manager Oefinger explained that fund balance will remain at 7.5% of the General Fund budget. He reviewed the criteria and guidelines for fund balance and how the bond rating agencies look at it. Discussion followed on fund balance. Town Operations has a longstanding history of returning funds to the General Fund. The tax collection rate remains stable at 98.1%.

The motion carried unanimously

2012-0150 Establishment of Tax Rate for Mumford Cove District Fund (FYE 13)

A motion was made by Councilor Streeter, seconded by Councilor Watson, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

2012-0151 Establishment of Tax Rate for Groton Sewer District Fund (FYE 13)

A motion was made by Councilor Antipas, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

2012-0167 Pending Litigation (2012 Standing Referral)

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Antipas, to enter executive session at 6:58 p.m. to discuss pending litigation between SEAT and the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation, and to invite the Town Manager to attend.

The motion carried unanimously

Discussed

The executive session ended at 7:24 p.m.

4. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.